



♦ The Minuteman ♦

Volume 26 Issue 3

January 1997



President's Corner

Repeater Report - By Chris Conti, N1NVL

While looking for material for this issue I came on an article in Hamradio Newsline that posed the question: "Is Ham Radio still relevant?" I sat back and began musing about the question. Certainly the question itself is relevant....looking back on the last few years, observing an apparent overall reduction of active interest in the hobby by long term hams, one does begin to wonder.

Then I focused on a second question...relevant to what? Relevance is relative, and before an answer to the main question can be given, we need the second piece. I came up with a little list of things ham radio might be relevant to: individuals, the public, local and federal government agencies, and businesses.

Individuals get involved in ham radio for a lot of reasons, but probably the first motivation is fun. The hobby *is* fun. Whether you use the hobby for simple communication or get into the intricacies of the technology, you get enjoyment from it. As one gets more involved, subsidiary reasons like public service come into play.

The public, mostly unaware of what ham radio is about, benefits whenever hams do something that helps people. Whether helping run communications for a parade, providing emergency communications in an emergency or helping on a missing person search, a ham is helping the public.

Sounds like ham radio is pretty relevant so far....

Government agencies benefit whenever hams help them out. No agency can afford the communications infrastructure that would enable total inter-service communications, and that is what hams provide. So the agencies are better able to work together when hams *volunteer* to help in times of stress, and the public benefits indirectly because they did not have to pay for the infrastructure that hams bring along with them.

Business has access to a significant market. Close to a million hams are out there in the U.S. alone, and they all buy equipment. This employs a lot of people and adds to the gross national product.

Still sound relevant?

Sure it does. So why would one ask the question in the first place? Could it have to do with the apparent loss of interest on the part of people who have been in the hobby for a long time? Well, we know about that one...we see it in the MMRA. I've mentioned before recalling how, at a meeting attended by about 200 MMRA members, people made campaign speeches for board of directors positions. Today we are lucky to have 60 members at a meeting, out of about 300.

But is that really the true test of relevance? I don't think so....we still have a lot of people who think that the MMRA is an important enough resource to give it their financial support, and

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Software and Firmware - 2 Meter Machines

Walter, NIHBR, our official "Creator and Keeper of the Software," has put another upgrade into place. Walter got new EPROM's with Firmware upgrades for all the 7K controllers, bringing all 7K Machines up to the v2.01 level. This means that we can standardize the software in all 7K machines, making all the features and functions run the same. There was also a ram upgrade that provided it's own internal backup battery and eliminated some older power switching circuits.

The first upgrade went to 449.925, the second to 146.610. Walter found Bryan, KA1YQB, at the 61 site working on the 6m machine - no surprise. He handed off the hardware upgrades to Bryan and went back to reload software. Later the same week Walter met up with me in Stoneham and upgraded the 146.715 machine. Then he drove to Quincy, opened the site, and upgraded the 146.67 machine. Both were off the air during the time between EPROM replacement and reloading of software over the phone line. 2 Members of the Quincy Police Department also got a tour of the facility and it was nice to know that if someone approaches the site in the dark, they will be challenged by the Police.

The Scam upgrades have added some new features and improved system function. The clock is now more accurate and Walter also included in the software some event routines which do things for us automatically. 10 minutes before Net time (Tuesdays at 8PM) the repeaters all set their links on. Also the clocks will automatically set themselves forward and backward

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JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING

WEDNESDAY, JAN 15, 1996 - 1930 HRS
CAMPION CENTER, WESTON MA
PROGRAM:

Easter Island DXpedition
Joe Rich, N10CS
HT Clinic
Raffle
Other Stuff

Repeater News....Continued

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for Daylight Savings time. New also to the program is an automatic link up for the 4th Sunday of the Month ARRL Sectional Net.

146.670 MHz - Quincy, MA - K1ML/R

(Formerly KA1HKP/R)

First things first, what's with the new callsign? Mike (Ex-KA1HKP) got one of those new fancy 1x2 Vanity Callsigns in the gateway 2 opening. Now he has K1ML (M.L. happen to be his Initials) so the call on the repeater changes, but everything else remains the same. Congratulations to Mike on the new call, also congratulations to Bill, WB1AMP, who is now K1WN. Bill is one of the faithful control ops on the 67 machine and has been available numerous times for audio checks on the machine, getting messages to Mike, monitoring the 67 machine for problems, and being available for backup communications while we are at the site.

Some changes have been made at Quincy; on Saturday, November 2 the final connections were made to the link radio. We balanced the audio, and while everything was functioning we noted some distortion in link audio. We played with levels for a while, but had to leave and let it play to work the bugs out. By Sunday the Link RX signaling circuit had failed and the 67 and 224.40 machines were locked up. Like I told Bill, N1KUG, if it worked the first time every time, we wouldn't have anything to do! Control Operator Ed, N1NOM, picked up on the lockup problems and the Tech Crew was alerted. Bill went up to the Quincy site, got us back to a non-linked status, and attempted to correct the problem. I went by on Monday to get a look and grab the link radio which had been confirmed to be the problem. By Wednesday Clark, N1NVK, and I had worked out the problems on the link radio. Thursday Bill and I were back at the site trying to get it all to work. There were a few minor problems; balancing 2 repeaters onto one audio bus with a single link radio is kind of a juggling act. First the 220 RX had to be brought up because the DTMF decoder on 224.400 was not responding to commands. With that level higher the link Transmitter had to be turned down. Because the audio was being clipped, we had to pad the 220RX to 440TX line. Then levels had to be set again...but the 220 TX was now overdriven...it gets real complicated. To give you an idea, the steps include:

- Generate on 222.800, set levels for 444.925TX, 224.400TX and 146.670TX.

- Generate on 449.925, set levels for 224.400TX 146.67TX.
- Generate on 146.070, set levels for 444.925TX, 224.400TX, 146.670TX.

And don't forget, each level affects the others. Well, we spent about 5 hours and still could not get audio from 146.670RX to 224.40TX, so in desperation we pulled the 224.400 repeater out along with the link interface to rework that on the bench. Mind you this all works at Weston, but this site seems to give us trouble. The fact that you are working in a room only as wide as it's door (28" wide) makes it a bit tough too!

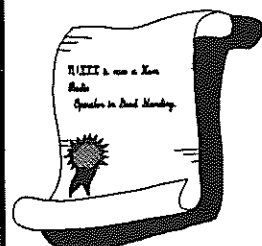
53.810 MHz - Marlborough, MA - KA1YQB/R

Bryan, KA1YQB, is continuing his quest for hi-fidelity audio on the 6 Meter machine. It's tough because you have 52.81 RX going into 440Mhz TX then over to a 440Mhz RX and finally into the 53.81 TX. A lot of different audio paths make for a bit of a headache with pre-emphasis / de-emphasis circuits in each receiver and transmitter. It will happen soon enough; I know Bryan has put a lot of time and work into this, and improvements have been reported by users of the 6m machine. Bryan and Ed went up to New Hampshire to do a bit of early holiday shopping and brought back a couple of 6 Meter antennas with about 3dB of gain. The replacement of both the transmit and receive antennas brought some better coverage to 6meters. Bryan also established the 6meter link to the Network. Now just like many of the other MMRA machines the 53.81 Repeater can link into the network. This will be a part-time link, to be brought up for the Tuesday nets and at various other times, but for the most part 6meters will run stand alone.

224.400 MHz - Quincy, MA - N1KUG/R - I made changes including a couple of adjustable audio pads for transmit levels and replaced the RX output pot with a trimmer pot. Of course, as soon as the repeater went back up to the hill, the receiver died. Bryan fixed the receiver. The first rf amp had gone, so Bryan came up with a good replacement and went one stage further. With 2 new JFET's in place and a tune up the receiver runs hotter than it ever has. The Friday after Thanksgiving I went back up to reinstall and rebalance audio levels. In the mean time, Tom, N1TWN, took over the most critical function in the realignment by bringing Coffee to the site, without which the MMRA Tech crew cannot function. Everything ran fine at first...then suddenly a strange tone popped up and levels went all over the place. After about 2 hours of messing around with it we found the test equipment was in fact the problem. Now I had to resort to using the next best thing to a hi-tech service monitor - Ed, N1NOM, keyed up and read his operators manual for one of the rigs he has as I tweaked the audio levels until everything averaged out correctly....well no one is perfect, and the audio input is just a bit overdriven on the receiver, but that will change soon enough.

146.610 MHz - Marlborough, MA - N1BHI/R

The second PA blew out in the GE station, but even at 15W the repeater still covered OK. Bryan did a lot of calling and bugging the folks at GE about how both amps blew at the same



MMRA VE Sessions

2nd Saturday of Each Month
Marlboro Public Library, 9AM
Contact: Bill Wade, K1IJZ
617-891-9079 Evenings 6 to 10 PM,
Weekends 8 AM to 10 PM.
Accredited - ARRL VE Program

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Repeater News...Continued

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time etc. etc. Eventually GE caved in to his relentless calls and sent free warranty replacements, Bryan quickly installed them and now we have a fully operational 61 machine again.

146.715 MHz - Stoneham, MA - N1NVL/R

Stoneham's hardware upgrade introduced an apparently defective Real-Time Clock (RTC) module; we're getting a replacement RTC from S-COM. The RTC currently gains about 10 minutes every 7 days. The replacement requires another site visit and a complete SW reload. Thanks to Walter, N1HBR, for tracking the problem, getting in touch with SCOM, and getting the replacement.

146.820 MHz - Weston, MA - KA1AL/R

The 82 machine has gone off the air mysteriously for an hour or so and returned to operation up by itself. I know the site has been checked out but as of this writing do not have an answer.

224.700 MHz - Weston, MA - N1HBR/R

This machine goes down the same time as 82. Both machines share a common 50Amp 12V supply....and the investigation continues.

A Side note ... I noted that a couple of users on Stoneham had reported the time shift happening during the Tuesday Night net... We really appreciate users who note problems and take the time to tell us about them

With 13 Stations in the system, things tend to get by us. 73 to all, and best wishes for another year of Hamming it up on the MMRA network.

The President's Corner...(Continued from page 1)

we have a constant influx of new people to carry the burden of keeping things going. It's a slow influx, but it *is* there.

That apparent reduction in interest is really an effect produced by our times. In the 90's there are many more things that compete for our attention than during the 60's and 70's. I know from personal experience that the time I can allocate to things is split many more ways than it was a few years ago.

So I guess that my answer is that ham radio is still *very* relevant. We all just have to keep that in mind, and try to do things that keep that true.

There's one group that still thinks ham radio is still relevant to *something*... Chris, N1NVL, Bryan, KA1YQB, Walter, N1HBR, Bill, N1KUG, Bill, K1ML, Ed, N1NOM — all these guys have been still working on the system. A lot more has gotten done, and the system is getting better and better. Read the Repeater Report for the details....

Another group - and it's funny, some of the guys mentioned above are in this one too - that is a little more unsung is the bunch that helps get out the newsletter every two months. Once I finish putting it together and get it printed, we have to convert three piles of paper into a folded, addressed and stamped bunch of newsletters for mailing. Over the last year, Dave, KT1X, and Lynne, KA1NLD, have been hosting "The Folding Party."

The President's Corner...Continued from Col 1

At about 7:30 on the Tuesday or Wednesday during the week before the membership meeting, Dave and Lynne allow a a group of people who, if observed from a distance by one who does not know any of the group, might evoke some raised eyebrows and shrugs into their home.... Ed Mulhern, Clark and Chris Conti, Bill (N1QPR) and Shelly (N1VJE) Northup and I show up to turn those three piles of paper into newsletters.

Ed brings half-and-half for the coffee because Dave and Lynne are into cholesterol reduction....but they do supply a goooood Columbian coffee blend. We take over the dining area and begin what could only be described as a dignified insurrection. The key to attendance at this party is having a thick skin and a quick wit.

I know that most of you reading this have never met each of the aforementioned individuals separately....never mind meeting them in a group. Suffice it to say, this bunch takes what is a pain in the neck, brutally boring job and turn it into a fun social event.

I truly appreciate their help in getting the newsletter ready to be mailed, and special thanks go to Dave and Lynne for allowing us to invade their home to get it done. I can only hope that they enjoy the social aspects of the gathering as much as everyone else seems to.

At the last folding party a photograph was taken in honor of my absence....I had to work, and the party started without me. They tell me that I will not be willing to publish that photo, as it features some sort of gesture being made by the members of the group signifying their opinion of my absence. I told them that I can fix any photograph digitally, and will perhaps publish a cleaned up version of it in the next newsletter, and seek the readers' opinion of the meaning of the photograph.

Fox Hunting is still alive and well in the MMRA; the Saturday morning hunts are still going strong....we've even gotten the participation of a group from the Fitchburg area. They come down in a van loaded for bear...dopplers, computers and GPS/APRS equipped, they have shown that they have the goodies and know how to use them. We'd like to think that this is the beginning of a trend, and that the MMRA's support for Fox Hunting is having a positive effect. Clark Conti originated the concept, and we all agreed that if we stuck with it, participation would grow. "Build it, and they will come...."

The January meeting will feature Joe Rich, N1OCS, with a presentation on his participation in the DXpedition to Easter Island. Organizing a DXpedition is like planning a safari, and is an expensive undertaking. Joe's talk should be interesting.

He also will be giving a short presentation dedicated to the memory of Dave Crocker. He was involved in many aspects of ham radio, and his passing was a significant loss to the amateur community.

It should be an interesting meeting, so try to make it. Hope to see you there...and if you can, bring a friend. If you know a new ham, or someone else not a member, invite them to the meeting. Maybe they will like what they see and hear, and join up!

Items of Interest**FCC Delays New RF-Exposure Rules**

From The ARRL Letter, Rick Lindquist, Editor

The FCC has postponed for one year, until January 1, 1998, the date for hams to comply with its new RF-exposure regulations. The ARRL was among those requesting the delay this fall. The League said that the additional time was needed for the FCC to draft implementation guidelines that amateurs could use to help them comply with the regulations--released on August 1, 1996 as ET Docket 93-62. Among other things, the regulations would require hams running 50 W PEP or more to conduct "routine RF radiation evaluations" to determine if RF fields were sufficient to cause human exposure to RF radiation levels in excess of those specified in the proposed regulations. The ARRL also has asked the FCC to reconsider the 50-W threshold, but the FCC report (DC 96-112) extending the compliance deadline did not address that issue.

The FCC announcement--which the ARRL obtained just before noon on Christmas Eve--noted that more time would be needed for affected licensees to determine that they comply with the new requirements. The extension also will allow required changes to Amateur Radio operator examinations to be made at the time other, routine revisions are made between now and July 1, 1998. In announcing the extension, the FCC said it disagreed with those petitioners who suggested that the time extension "will have significant adverse effects on public health."

Since the FCC announced the RF-exposure regulations, the ARRL has worked with technically knowledgeable volunteers to assist the staff, the RF Safety Committee and the FCC in coming up with a workable ham radio approach toward RF safety. ARRL Laboratory Supervisor Ed Hare, KA1CV--the ARRL HQ liaison to the ARRL RF Safety Committee--has spearheaded the ARRL's effort. "The ARRL is very pleased that the FCC extended the compliance date," Hare said. "As all parties involved tried to fully understand the new requirements, it soon became obvious that neither the FCC nor the ham radio community was ready for the January 1, 1997, implementation deadline."

Hare said the delay will give both the FCC and hams more time to better understand the implications of the rules and will give hams an opportunity to evaluate their stations as the regulations will require (see "The FCC's New RF-Exposure Regulations," QST, Jan 1997, p 47).

The entire text of Report DC 96-112 may be found on ARRLWeb at <http://www.arrl.org/fcc/dc96-112.html> (or click on What's New or RF Safety News). See Happenings in February QST for additional information.

HELP WANTED: READERS NEEDED BY HANDI-HAMS

The Courage HANDI-HAM Center needs volunteer readers to record ham radio books and publications on audio tape. Volunteer readers provide a valuable service to persons with severe physical disabilities and sensory impairments who cannot use regular printed books.

Volunteers should hold an Amateur Radio license and be familiar with hobby terms and expressions. A clear speaking voice and the ability to read the written text of Amateur Radio books and describe the diagrams and pictures are essential.

HANDI-HAMS will provide a tech sheet and a sample tape to new volunteers, as well as a copy of the book to be read and cassette master tapes. Readers will need a good-quality cassette tape recorder and a quiet place to record. Some of the books we would ask readers to tape would be ARRL license manuals, special interest Amateur Radio books, and instruction manuals for radios.

This volunteer work can be done in one's own home, at one's own pace, as long as there is a quiet place to read. It is a wonderful way to share Amateur Radio with others!

Please contact the Courage HANDI-HAM System at: Courage Center, HANDI-HAM System, 3915 Golden Valley Rd, Golden Valley, MN 55422; tel 612-520-0515; fax 612-520-0577; e-mail handiham@mtn.org. Visit the HANDI-HAM World at <http://www.mtn.org/handiham/>. --Patrick Tice, WA0TDA

NORTH AMERICAN DIGITAL SYSTEM DIRECTORY TO BE ON-LINE

With ARRL support, the Tucson Amateur Packet Radio Corporation (TAPR) now will provide information on digital systems that formerly appeared in the annual ARRL Repeater Directory. The digital directory information will be available at <http://www.tapr.org/directory/>. By not including digital system listings in the 1997-98 edition of the Repeater Directory, the publication can better focus on its primary use as a guide to voice repeaters for traveling amateurs. In planning the 1997-98 edition, the ARRL concluded that the Repeater Directory was no longer the most effective medium for this information. Discussions involving various regional digital groups that provide data to the digital section of the Repeater Directory led to the conclusion that TAPR was the logical group to take on the task of a new North American Digital System Directory.

This new database will describe systems used by Amateur Radio stations involved in digital communications in United States, Canada, and Mexico. The Digital System Directory will be based on information provided by regional, state, and local organizations as well as individuals, in a nearly real-time format. This should allow information to be maintained and updated more frequently

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MMRA Information - Repeaters, Officers and Board Members

MMRA Repeaters:

Marlboro	146.61	N1BHI/R	FTL	P	
Marlboro	449.925	N1HBR/RFTL	P		PL - 88.5 in and out
Quincy	146.67	KA1HKP/R	PTL	P	
Quincy	224.40	N1KUG/R	FTL	L	PL - 103.5 in, none out
Weston	146.82	KA1AL/RPTL	P		PL - 146.2 out, none in
Weston	224.70	N1HBR/RFTL	L		
Hopkinton	223.94	N1BHI/R	FTL	L	PL - 103.5 in and out
Stoneham	146.715	N1NVL/RPTL	P		PL - 146.2 out, none in.
Stoneham	446.725	N1NVK/R	PTL	L	PL - 88.5 in, none out
Taunton	449.575	N1NVL/RFTL	L		PL - 88.5 in, none out

[FTL = Full Time Linked] PTL = Part Time Linked]

[L = Patch available via link] P = Local Autopatch]

MMRA Officers:

President:	Andy Morrison, N1BHI	To Contact Officers
Vice President:	Clark Conti, N1NVK	or Board Members
Secretary:	David Croll, KT1X	
	Lynne Ausman, KA1NLD	Call MMRA Voice
Treasurer:	Ian MacLennan, AF1R	Mail Line:
Clerk:	Ed Mulhern, N1NOM	
Directors:	Tom Qualtieri, WB1GMA	508 - 489 - 2282
	Al Kunian, KA1AL	Toll Free from
	Chris Conti, N1NVL	508 and 617 Areas
	Bob Feltmate, WA1ZJE	
Newsletter Editor:	Andy Morrison, N1BHI	MMRA E-Mail
		mmra@mmra.org

Important MMRA Club Information:

Membership Meetings: 3rd Wed of Sept, Nov, Jan, Mar, May at Campion Center, Weston
at 7:30 PM

Board Meetings:

Meeting Dates for 1996-97 Season: September 18, November 20, January 15, March 19, & May 21.

3rd Wed of Oct, Dec, Feb, Apr. Meetings are open and members are welcome.

If a visiting member wants to be on the agenda, please contact Andy Morrison beforehand.

(508) 489-2282. -- This is a local call from any 508 exchange phone, and is a free call from both 617 and 508 areas.

MMRA Voice Mailbox

Newsletter Information

Mailing Date

Submission Deadline

September issue

Sept 11, 1996

Sept 1, 1996

November issue

Nov 13, 1996

Oct 26, 1996

January Issue

Jan 8, 1997

Dec 28, 1996

March Issue

Mar 12, 1997

Feb 22, 1997

May issue

May 14, 1997

Apr 26, 1997

The MMRA is dedicated to Amateur Radio and the public service. The MMRA is a registered non-profit Massachusetts corporation. Membership is open to all amateurs. Annual dues are \$25.00 individual, \$35.00 family.

Minuteman Articles — Solicitation

If you have ever built anything, fixed something, or have an experience that you want to share, then you should submit an article to the MMRA Minuteman. Contact Andy Morrison, N1BHI, if you want to talk about it. We can scan artwork and schematics to make an article more interesting and useful. Give it a try!

NTIA Report Bullish on Additional HF Allocations for Amateur Radio

QST de W1AW - ARRL Bulletin 97 ARLB097

High Frequency (3-30 MHz) Spectrum Planning Options, a planning document released December 13 by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, says the HF spectrum is flexible enough "to accommodate most, if not all," demands for additional HF spectrum, including new and bigger HF ham bands. The NTIA is an Executive Branch agency in the Department of Commerce that's responsible for developing telecommunications policy and advising the President on telecommunications matters.

The NTIA's latest report is a follow-on to an NTIA study released in March 1995 (see QST, June 1995, page 75).

The Options report addresses spectrum availability and long-range planning options for services that were identified in the earlier report as needing additional HF spectrum—including Amateur Radio. The report cites a potential 900 kHz or so of expanded or upgraded allocations for Amateur Radio in the HF spectrum, including:

- An exclusive, worldwide allocation at 3500 to 3800 kHz
- A new band at 4945 to 4995 kHz (additional technical studies would be required)
- An "aligned worldwide" allocation at 6900 to 7200 kHz
- Expanded worldwide, primary allocations at 10100 to 10350 and 14000 to 14400 kHz
- Expanded allocations at 18068 to 18318, 24740-24890, and 28000 to 30000 kHz.

Some of the potential expansions proposed for amateurs and broadcasting are mutually exclusive or could involve sharing by

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Items of Interest....Continued

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than in a yearly publication. TAPR will also work with participating organizations to make this information available on TAPR's yearly CD-ROM as well as some future publication for local/regional groups to distribute.

The purpose of the Digital System Directory is not to manage, coordinate, or regulate the usage of digital systems, but to provide the most up-to-date and accurate listing of digital systems that can be provided. Neither is it a formal organization, but a mechanism to allow regional groups to provide and share information regarding digital systems.

The Digital System Directory is intended for use by individuals to further their enjoyment of the hobby, and by organizations to help plan and develop digital networks.

Regional/Local groups have already begun to participate in the process. These groups include TwinsLAN, Texas Packet Radio Society, Miami Valley FM Association, Ohio Area Repeater Council, Puget Sound AR TCP/IP Group, Northern California Packet Association, Northern Illinois Packet Radio Frequency Council, Indiana Digital Experimenters Association, Central Lakeshore Experimenter's Digital Organization, HogNet Packet Radio Association, YCCC Sysops Association and the Missouri Amateur Packet Radio Society. TAPR encourages other regional groups to support this project by contributing data from their respective areas.

For further information on the project and how to get involved, regional groups should check <http://www.tapr.org/directory/> or send e-mail to Carl Estey at wa0cgg@tapr.org. --Jay Mabey, NU0X

FCC UPHOLDS FINE FOR VIOLATING AMATEUR RULES

The FCC has upheld a \$6000 fine in the malicious interference case of Timothy Harold Hoffman of Phoenix, Arizona. The FCC cited Hoffman last spring for transmitting on ham radio frequencies without a valid license, failing to allow the FCC to inspect his radio station, willfully and maliciously interfering with licensed operations, and making one-way transmissions of material "to amuse or entertain." The FCC fined Hoffman last August after Phoenix repeater users reported being plagued for years by malicious interference by someone posing as a ham and expropriating call signs to use on the air (an FCC public notice erroneously identified Hoffman as an "Amateur Radio operator").

The Arizona Repeater Association's local interference committee helped to track down and identify Hoffman, notified the FCC, and continued to document his activities (see The ARRL Letter, Vol 15, No 9, Sep 13, 1996). Hoffman eventually admitted responsibility for the violations. But, when the FCC at first failed to take meaningful action, the association wrote to the White House and members of Congress. Subsequently, the FCC fined Hoffman, and he admitted responsibility for the violations. In October, he sought a reduction or elimination of the forfeiture saying he could not afford to pay because of child support payments, tax liens and a garnishment. But, the FCC said Hoffman "failed to adequately document his claim of inability to pay." --FCC

New HF Spectrum.....*(Continued from page 5)*

the two services. These include the potential expansions at 30, 20 and 17 meters. According to the report, ham radio allocations account for 13.1 percent of the HF spectrum (3 to 30 Mhz). "There are no current plans to auction any HF spectrum," the NTIA report states, but notes that additional allocations for ham radio would come at the expense of other services--primarily fixed, fixed-mobile and broadcasting. "The expansion and upgrading of amateur allocations in the 10 MHz, 14 MHz, 18 MHz, and 24 MHz (bands) appear acceptable; however, this will depend on future decrease of requirements for the aeronautical mobile (R) or the fixed services internationally," the report said. Changes in the 80 and 40-meter bands "will require the inclusion of these proposals in US preparations for future WRCs," the report added. A requested allocation at 6900-7200 would serve "to reduce inter-regional sharing and interference from HF broadcasting in the 7100-7300 kHz band," the report said. The report called the requested upgraded allocation at 3500 to 3800 kHz "a good candidate for a common worldwide exclusive amateur allocation at the 3.5 MHz band."

To help satisfy demand for additional HF spectrum access, the report suggests more efficient use of current allocations, moving current HF spectrum users to other portions of the HF spectrum, use of other non-spectrum technologies and use of higher frequencies. The report also said sharing--and removal of some "exclusive" allocations--might be another option.

Calling ham radio "the oldest radio service" and one that "pre-dates regulation," the NTIA report casts the hobby in a favorable light. "Radio amateurs have made significant contributions to the field of radio propagation, HF single-sideband radio, HF data communications systems, packet radio protocols and communications satellite design." The report goes on to say that ham radio "continues to play an important role in disaster-relief communications, where amateurs provide radio communications independent of the telephone network or other radio services."

To view the complete report, set your Web browser to <http://www.ntia.doc.gov/osmhome/reports/hfspo/contents.html>.

Editor's Note: This could bring about a rebirth of 40 meters. It deserves our support.

New Virus Alert!!!!

If anyone receives mail entitled: PENPAL GREETINGS! please delete it WITHOUT reading it. This is a warning for all Internet users - there is a dangerous virus propagating across the Internet through an e-mail message entitled "PENPAL GREETINGS!". DO NOT DOWNLOAD ANY MESSAGE ENTITLED "PENPAL GREETINGS!"

Penpal Greetings will re-write your hard drive. Not only that, but it will scramble any disks that are even close to your computer. It will recalibrate your refrigerator's coolness setting so all your ice cream goes melty. It will demagnetize the strips on all your credit cards, screw up the tracking on your television and use subspace field harmonics to scratch any CD's you try to play.

It will give your ex-girlfriend your new phone number.. It will mix Kool-aid into your fishtank. It will drink all your beer and leave it's socks out on the coffee table when there's company coming over. It will put a dead kitten in the back pocket of your good suit pants and hide your car keys when you are late for work.

Penpal Greetings will make you fall in love with a penguin. It will give you nightmares about circus midgets. It will pour sugar in your gas tank and shave off both your eyebrows while dating your girlfriend behind your back and billing the dinner and hotel room to your Discover card.

It will seduce your grandmother. It does not matter if she is dead, such is the power of Penpal Greetings, it reaches out beyond the grave to sully those things we hold most dear.

It moves your car randomly around parking lots so you can't find it. It will kick your dog. It will leave libidinous messages on your boss's voice mail in your voice! It is insidious and subtle. It is dangerous and terrifying to behold. It is also a rather interesting shade of mauve.

Penpal Greetings will give you Dutch Elm disease. It will leave the toilet seat up. It will make a batch of Methanphedimine in your bathtub and then leave bacon cooking on the stove while it goes out to chase gradeschoolers with your new snowblower.

"Penpal Greetings," just as the beloved "Goodtimes" virus email message, is one big fat hoax. It's a joke, a sham, a pun, a fib....

Editor's Note: Walter Ching, NIHBR, strikes again....his submission, from an internet source, reminds us of the danger in believing everything you read in internet mail. There have been several such "spams" over the last couple of years....but beware, there have also been plenty of real virus alerts. The safest thing to do is to follow a simple rule....after download or receiving it, never run a program or open a file that could contain macro code without scanning for a virus with the latest version of virus signature information available for your virus scan program!

Even after doing that, you could be the victim of a brand new virus, as yet not known to your virus signature file. The only defense is the use of one of several "emergency recovery" procedures provided by disk utility packages along with a current, complete backup of the contents of your hard drive.

Purchase an easy to use backup media device...like a removable media disk drive or a tape backup system. Ease of use is the key...if the thing is a pain to use, then you will not do backups often enough. Simple precautions can save you from a big hassle...and:

If your fingernails turn green, you got Dutch Elm disease.

Letters to the Editor

Since so many of us now have email, that makes communicating a lot easier....and since more and more people are sending email to the MMRA, we would like to solicit letters to the editor of the Minuteman. That's not to say that "snail mail" will be ignored...just send regular mail to our post office box (2282) in Lexington. Send email to alm@mmra.org with the subject set to Letter to Editor.

What might you write about? Anything you want to say about ham radio, the MMRA, other issues or subjects...anything is fair game. We can't guarantee every letter will make the Minuteman, but we do promise a reply.

If you have a technical question send it to the Minuteman, and if it might be of general interest, your question and an answer, provided by one of the MMRA technical gurus, will be printed. If it doesn't get into an issue, an answer will be returned via return mail, either on paper or electronically.

Remember that one of the things that makes ham radio a great hobby is that there is always someone who can help with a problem. There are a lot of people in the MMRA with a lot of knowledge, so take advantage of that. If you have a question that we cannot answer, we'll try to publish it. When a controversial issue has everyone in an uproar, we'd like to hear what you think. If a lot of mail should come to the Minuteman, we'll probably publish a compendium of opinions.

In the President's Corner, the issue of the relevance of ham radio is discussed. Andy, NIBHI, expresses his opinion, and we'd like to hear what you think about that question. Write about what you think is relevant about ham radio....what is important to you or others? What makes this a valuable hobby?

Who knows...your response might even become an article. By sharing your thoughts about things with the Minuteman, you will help this newsletter become more interesting for your fellow MMRA members. So give it some thought, get out pen and paper, or fire up your email client program, sit right down and write us a letter.

Give the MMRA World Wide Web Home Page a try..... let us know what you think.... any ideas are welcome. We are looking into things like an MMRA list server. We now have our own domain name - mmra.org. The Web Page keeps getting better.....

WWW Address:

HAMFEST and CONVENTION CALENDAR

- * = Conventions
- + = ARRL Hamfest
- x = Non-ARRL Hamfest
- ** = Convention Pending EC Action
- # = Holiday

*From the ARRL Web Site-Northeastern U.S.
January through early April*

- January 11
+ Skyline ARC, Marathon, NY
Barbara Mudge, KB2TIK
3364 Rt. 221 W, Marathon, NY 13803
607-849-6751
- January 18
+ MO Valley, Green Hills, & Ray-Clay ARCs, St. Joseph, MO
John Winkler, WB0VRA
Rte 1, Box 53A, Gower, MO 64454
816-424-6484
- January 19
+ Metro 70cm Network, Yonkers, NY
Otto Supliski, WB2SLQ
53 Hayward St., Yonkers, NY 10704
914-969-1053
- January 26
+ Maryland Mobileers ARC, Odenton, MD
Jim Botluk, KD3SI
10 Tiburon Ct., Annapolis, MD 21403
410-280-9815
806-381-8810
- February 9
+ Chestnut Ridge ARC, Latrobe, PA
Bill Demosky, K3AFS
1740 Raymond Ave., Latrobe, PA 15650-3039
412-539-1552
- February 15
x Algonquin ARC, Marlborough, MA
Ann Weldon, KA1PON
PO Box 258, Marlborough, MA 01752
508-481-4988
- February 15
x ARA of the Southern Tier, Horseheads, NY
Jack Slocum
410 Shelbourne St., Horseheads, NY 14845
607-739-4866
- February 15
+ Harrisburg RAC, Oberlin, PA
Tom Hale, WU3X
PO Box 418, Halifax, PA 17032
717-232-6087
- February 16
+ Long Island Mobile ARC, Freeport, NY
Mark Nadel, W2OT
22 Springtime Ln., Levittown, NY 11756
516-796-2366
E-mail: hmn@i2000.com
- February 22
x Radio Amateurs of Northern Vermont, Milton, VT
Mitch Stern, WB2JSJ
PO Box 99, Essex, VT 05451-8099
802-879-6589
E-mail: wb2jsj@vbi.champlain.edu
- February 23
x Greater Boston Antique Radio Collectors, Westford, MA
Lisa Friedrichs
PO Box 2, Carlisle, MA 01741
508-371-0512

- February 23
+ South Hills ARC, Pittsburgh, PA
Eric Hegerle, N3VOC
PO Box 79211, Pittsburgh, PA 15216
412-341-2270
E-mail: hegerle@sgi.net
- March 1
x Black Warrior Swapfest, Tuscaloosa, AL
Kelly Bruce, WD4DAT
PO Box 3171, Tuscaloosa, AL 35403
205-339-7882
E-mail: bwhamfest@juno.com
- March 1
+ Shore Points ARC, Absecon, NJ
John G. Barbieri, KB2HZU
1002 Bartlett Ave., Linwood, NJ 08221
609-653-1987
- March 1
+ Split Rock ARA & West Morris Wireless, Parsippany, NJ
Bernie Brownstein, WB2YOK
PO Box 251, Flanders, NJ 07836
201-584-5399
- March 2
x Insurance City Repeater Club, Bristol, CT
Pete Brunelli
358 Andrews St., Southington, CT 06489
860-620-0176
- March 7-8
* Maine State Convention, Lewiston, ME
Dave Blethen, KD1OW
27 Park St., Lisbon, ME 04250
207-353-6433
- March 9
+ Great South Bay ARC, Lindenhurst, NY
Walter Wenzel, KA2RGI
373 15th St., West Babylon, NY 11704-2606
516-957-0218
E-mail: wwenzel@li.net
<http://www.li.net/~tomcar/hamfest.htm>
- March 16
+ Keystone VHF Club, York, PA
John H. Shaffer, W3SST
2596 Church Rd., York, PA 17404
717-764-4805
Fax: 717-764-8193
E-mail: w3sst@juno.com
- March 22
x Irvington-Roseland Amateur Club, West Orange, NJ
Jim Howe, N2TDI
201-402-6066
- March 23
+ Delaware Valley Radio Assn., Trenton, NJ
Darryl Foyuth, N2JVP
DVRA, PO Box 7024, West Trenton, NJ 08628
609-882-2240
- March 23
+ Westchester Emergency Communications Assn., Yonkers, NY
Thomas Raffaelli, WB2NHC
544 Manhattan Ave., Thornwood, NY 10594
914-741-6606
<http://www.weca.org/wecafest.html>
- April 5-6
* Maryland State Convention, Timonium, MD
William Dobson, WA3ZER
12315 Boncrest Dr., Reisterstown, MD 21136
410-HAM-FEST E-mail: gbhc@concentric.net
<http://www.concentric.net/~gbhc>